



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

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BULLETIN

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The former Tower in Hull (East Yorks) which has closed after only four months as a ballroom; photo taken July 2005



The Adam Smith Theatre in Kirkcaldy (Fife) which is having a revamp; photo taken March 2004

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I'm sorry to have to begin with a moan. I have asked this before but please can you make sure anything you send me has the correct postage. Anything bigger than A5 [that's half a Bulletin page] or thicker than normal almost certainly needs more postage. If in doubt, please take it to a Post Office. If it is underpaid, it costs the CTA an additional fee as well as the postage due and I have to make special arrangements for it to be delivered.

Please don't include requests for other committee members with your submissions – please refer to the list on the right and contact the appropriate person directly. One letter I had this time asked me to pass on information to publications, casework and membership. That would have involved me in three additional tasks.

On the facing page you will see the events notice for a double bill of talks on 26 November. I have been told that the CTA Bookstall will be at this event. There wasn't room to fit that on the page itself so I thought I'd mention it here. You can choose and purchase from a selection of books and magazines associated with cinema history.

I am still looking to retire as Bulletin Editor after over 24 years in the post. The situation is becoming more urgent so if you feel like taking over, please contact me to see what is involved. You need to be computer literate and have DTP experience. Most DTP programs will do the job but we can provide a copy of Serif PagePlus X9 if required. There is a more modern version – Serif Affinity – but that will not handle cross references or footnotes, both of which I use. For graphics editing I use GIMP, which is Freeware – and very powerful. I can provide copies of my cinema photos and Bulletin resource material.

Finally, I may probably be the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas. There is a suitable graphic below.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



Quick Guide to CTA Social Media



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www.twitter.com/Ctheatreassoc



www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.ticketsource.co.uk



Zoom talks and presentations platform

Useful CTA Contacts

digital@cta-uk.org : enquires about digital services
visits@cta-uk.org : enquires about talks/events bookings
info@cta-uk.org : general enquires
Amazon Smile link : smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0
Visits' registration phone hotline: 020 8800 8393

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of
cinema buildings

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BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the
Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item
does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the
Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.
It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;
items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.
Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE,
otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.
VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits
entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the
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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER

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Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA www.ludo.co.uk

VISITS AND EVENTS

Join Us for A 'Double Bill' Of Talks

The CTA is delighted to announce the return of in-person talks at the Gallery (at Alan Baxter's Gallery, Farringdon, London). We will be presenting two fascinating talks about different aspects of cinema history.

Saturday 26 November at 5:30pm (doors open 5:00pm)

THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE / BFI SOUTHBANK

An illustrated talk by Allen Eyles



Telekinema, precursor to National Film Theatre on Southbank (1951)

Allen will discuss the history of the National Film Theatre (NFT) since its inception as the 'Telekinema' on the Southbank in 1951, resulting from the Festival of Britain. A successful campaign for a permanent venue prevented it from being closed. It underwent several changes and extensions including being rebranded as the BFI Southbank in 2007 when it formed a working relationship with the BFI. Appropriately, it is also the venue where the CTA was founded in 1967.

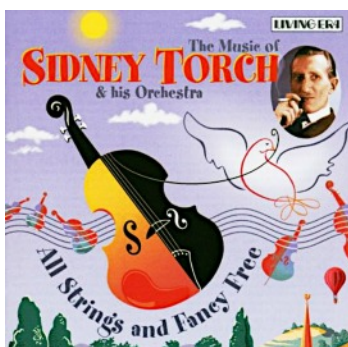
Our speaker Allen Eyles is a celebrated author of many books associated with film and cinema history and is a founder member and patron of the CTA.

*** PLUS ***

WHEN CINEMA LET IN THE LIGHT (II)

An illustrated musical talk by Martin Cleave

After delighting the CTA audiences with the first part of his celebration of light orchestral music's contribution to the cinema-going experience of the mid-20th Century, Martin returns with more choice examples of music to help you reminisce about the glory days of cinema. Recreating examples using historic recordings, this presentation will feature luminaries from the world of light music whose careers provided part of the distinctive sound of cinema. From the orchestras of the silent era to the music and organists of the super cinemas, accompanied by images of historic picture palaces where these musicians performed.



Sidney Torch was a leading musician, organist and composer of the cinema era

Martin, who is Pianist and Music Director at the Royal Academy of Dance and has a lifelong interest in cinema history, will share his finest rediscoveries with us.

BOOKING YOUR TICKET FOR THE TALK

CTA talks are open to everyone – members and non-members alike.

Admission: £12 per person, including glass of wine or soft drink.



Booking is done on-line using TicketSource:

www.ticketsource.co.uk

Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box.

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Mike Whitcombe

The CTA Casework Committee is continually involved in securing a positive future for many endangered cinemas, both present and former. Here is a summary of their current work load.

Grade II* Listed

GRANADA WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON

A report from the architects on the new paint scheme has led us to object to certain flat colours to be implemented instead of the original more complex and textured treatments. There are apparently insufficient funds for a complete restoration.

Grade II Listed

EMPIRE HAYMARKET, LONDON



We believe the Crown Estate is considering revising or delaying the scheme approved in 2020. We have been invited to attend a meeting to discuss. *Photo taken August 2018.*

RITZ NUNEATON

The building is decaying and the Nepalese owners have no funds for the previously proposed reuse. We have contacted the local Council's regeneration team. The Theatres Trust is also in dialogue with them about a theatre for the town and will raise the case for the Ritz.

Not Listed

PLAZA / ODEON GLOUCESTER



The Plaza/Odeon, which closed as a bingo hall in July this year, is in a Conversation Area and we will be in contact with the local authority regarding the building's future. *Photo taken May 2006.*

More Casework in the full Bulletin

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

Listed below are the back numbers of *Picture House* that are still available:

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 16	£3.00	Dominion London; 3,000 plus; John Broadley remembers.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alistair Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 22	£3.50	Burrell, Foley, Fischer; Palace Theatre London; David Nye.
No 24	£4.50	Oldest Cinema - Harringay; Cardiff Round-up; Odeon Miscellany.
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea;.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/Apollo; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo - A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The Clifton Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals; Majestic Oxford; Odeon North Finchley; Films at the Royal Albert Hall.
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham - a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Majestic Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.
No 43	£6.00	Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's ABC memories; Scala Kings Cross; Picture House Campbelltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories.
No 44	£6.00	Village Cinemas of NE Scotland; William Keys' career; Bernard Snowball remembers Pt1.
No 45	£8.50	Classic Repertory Cinemas; Blackpool Cinemas; Thomas Jackson; Bernard Snowball remembers Pt2. Special 100-page issue.
No 46	£6.00	Cecil Clavering, Odeon Architect: Pavilion Hailsham; Working For Star; Focus Sevenoaks Figures.

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues of *Picture House* 9, 10, 14/15, 20 & 23, priced £5.00 each, plus postage. A list of their contents was printed on p4 of Bulletin 52/2 or can be obtained by SAE or email from the Sales Officer or Bulletin Editor.

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2020 are £4.00 per year (6 issues), individual copies are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2021 and 2022 are £5.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years - 1967 to 1986. Please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

Ordering

For post and packing: total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.40, total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.40, total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.40. For larger orders and overseas, please contact the Sales Officer, email: sales@cta-uk.org. Orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34, Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN. Cheques/POs payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send credit/debit card number with expiry date and security code. A complete sales list is available by sending an SAE and all the books can be seen on the CTA website www.cta-uk.org where you can also place your order using PayPal. A sales list is sent with every order.

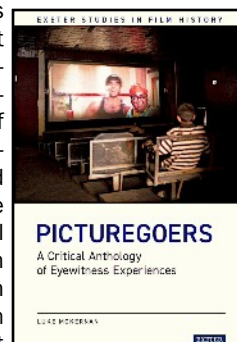
Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

The Final Curtain by Darren Holden. 42 pages, paperback, illustrated. £10.00 from: the-modernist.org or 58 Port Street, Manchester, M1 2EQ.

This slim volume contains around 36 full-page photographs of the interiors of abandoned UK cinemas and theatres. There are 12 different properties featured, including the Forum/ABC Liverpool, the Ritz Nuneaton and, more up to date, the Showcase in Manchester. There is no text, just the photographs, which, although very atmospheric, have reproduced rather on the dark side. They don't compare with the well-lit photos we are used to seeing in books by other authors on the same subject. In the reviewer's opinion, the volume seems a bit overpriced for what it is and whilst it is good to have another book of derelict cinemas, wouldn't it be nice if someone could produce a book celebrating the many successful restorations that have taken place both in the UK and overseas?

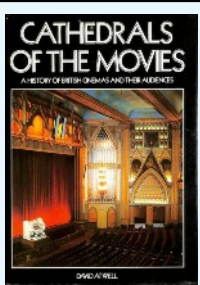
Picturegoers: A Critical Anthology of Eyewitness Experiences by Luke McKernan. 248 pages, hardback, illustrated. ISBN 9781804130124. About £80.00, available from Amazon, etc

The high price of this book suggests that it is intended more for the academic market but it may be of interest to CTA members. The description states: "This book is a carefully selected, thematically arranged collection of eyewitness accounts of seeing motion pictures - from the 1890s to the present day and from countries across the globe. Included are essays, diaries, memoirs, travel accounts, oral history interviews, poems and extracts from novels. These verbatim accounts - from both professional and amateur writers - have been selected not only for what they tell us about the historical experience of cinema in many countries but also for their literary value. Here is evocative testimony that shows how deeply cinema touches emotional needs and the huge impact that the cinema has had on modern society. While most film history studies are centred on films or those who produce them, *Picturegoers* puts the voices of the audience first. It analyses and celebrates the audience's point of view, shaped by time, experience and place, providing a rich, entertaining portrait of a medium that became so transformative precisely because anyone, rich or poor, educated or not, could share in it. The book will appeal to scholars interested in the relationship between cinema and society, those engaged in audience studies and general readers interested in world cinema history". (Some sample pages can be viewed by finding the title on Amazon and selecting 'look inside this book'.)



Second-Hand Books

We have a selection of second-hand books for sale, including rare titles such as *Cathedrals of the Movies*, *The Picture Palace*, etc. To receive a full list with around 50 titles, please send an email to the Sales Officer sales@cta-uk.org with 'Second Hand Book List' as the subject. Or write to the Sales Officer, 34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN (SAE appreciated).



NATIONAL CINEMA DAY

By Mike Whitcombe

Did you celebrate National Cinema Day on Saturday 3 September 2022? Cinemas in America, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland all participated in the scheme, which offered movie fans a ticket for either £3 or \$3. The day proved to be a big success on both sides of the Atlantic and helped an industry still struggling from post pandemic blues fill auditoria and make people remember just why the big screen is the only place to see the latest blockbuster.

National Cinema Day proved particularly successful in America as it fell on Labor Day Weekend, notoriously a slow few days of trading. There are 5,400 cinemas in America, of which 3,000 (boasting a total of 30,000 screens) participated in the offer. On the Friday and Sunday, cinema admissions in America were 1 million and 1.7 million respectively. But on the Saturday, National Cinema Day, that figure skyrocketed to a staggering 7.28 million admissions. In Canada, 820,000 patrons took advantage of the offer, bringing the total for North American admissions to 8.1 million on a single day. That amounted to a total box office of \$24.3 million, which, despite the discounted ticket prices, was 9% up on the previous Saturday.

The number one film on Labor Day weekend was *Top Gun: Maverick*, Tom Cruise's action-fuelled sequel to *Top Gun*. It took \$6 million on the Saturday and a total of \$7.9 million over the weekend, bringing its domestic total to \$701 million after 15 weeks in theaters and £1 billion – yes, that really does say billion – globally. If you still haven't seen *Top Gun: Maverick* on the big screen – where it truly deserves to be seen – go see it now! It deserves all the accolades it's received and proves how influential Tom Cruise is as an actor and a producer. In tenth spot was *Jaws*, released in 3D. This 47-year-old Steven Spielberg masterpiece only debuted at select sites but on a per theater basis, it actually outperformed every other movie making £2.6 million at the Box Office. "The event outstripped our biggest expectations," said Jackie Brenneman, president of the Cinema Foundation, a non-profit arm of the National Association of Theater Owners. "The idea of the day was to thank movie-goers for an amazing summer and now we have to thank them for an amazing day."

On the United Kingdom mainland (England, Scotland and Wales) 570 cinemas, that's about two thirds of UK cinemas, participated in National Cinema Day. Admissions totalled 1.46 million, a 243% uplift on admissions for the previous Saturday and around three times the number of admissions normally seen on the first Saturday in September before the pandemic. This figure also exceeded the record of 1.34 million admissions recorded in 1997, when the UK last held such an event. UK Box Office takings for National Cinema Day totalled a very healthy £4.38 million. In Northern Ireland admissions totalled 153,000 while in the Republic of Ireland admissions were 53,000, creating a total of 1.6 million admissions for this side of the Atlantic.

All the major cinema chains operating in the UK participated in National Cinema Day, including Odeon, Vue, Cineworld, Empire and Picturehouse as well as many smaller, independent cinemas. Some cinemas just advertised the promotion on their website but others were determined to make it a day to remember. Staff at the Odeon Port Solent dressed up as iconic cinema characters, which their younger patrons in particular really enjoyed. The number one film in the UK was the highly entertaining *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. This was not surprising as with tickets at just £3 each, it was affordable for families to attend. In fact, a family of four, say, could watch a film for the price of an adult ticket. *Top Gun: Maverick* also did well, just like it did in the States.

"The appeal to cinema audiences of the true cinema experience is universal, enduring and deeply rooted," said Iain Jacob, chair of industry body Cinema First. "We wanted to celebrate this with a big 'thank you' to audiences and a great offer to everybody in the UK. The cinema experience has always been the most enduring and positive form of escapism. By combining the joy of cinema with an amazing accessible price we are proud to have supported our audience at this incredibly challenging time."

The whole point of National Cinema Day was to put butts on seats, as the old Hollywood moguls used to say. In that respect it clearly worked and proved that the industry is growing in strength following the devastating pandemic. Around the time of National Cinema Day, the media broke the story that Covid had killed cinema after Cineworld announced they would be filing for bankruptcy. But in a world of misinformation, the truth is very different. It's true Cineworld were financially hit by the pandemic but they were hit harder by their own mismanagement, which included their failed acquisition of Canadian cinema chain Cineplex that led to legal action and the Ontario Supreme Court of Justice ordering Cineworld to pay CA\$1.4 billion in damages. Elsewhere, though, things look more encouraging. Summer Box Office totals in the US, for instance, might be 21% down from 2019 when they hit a record \$4.25 billion but at \$3.35 billion, they're up 91% from last year. And here in the UK, Box Office admissions are currently at 80% of what they were in 2019, before government regulations forced our favourite picture palaces to close for months at a time.

Many in the industry want National Cinema Day to become an annual event. Will it? Maybe. For cinema chains it certainly makes sense. Cinemas make most of their profit from their inviting, if overpriced, concession stands. If the put-upon parent with a gaggle of screaming kids or the youngster on a zero-hour contract and minimum wage only pays £3 for a ticket, they have more to spend on coke, popcorn and hot-dogs. Cinema chains, who must give large percentages of their Box Office to distributors, then make more money. No wonder it's called show business! Here's to the next National Cinema Day!



Is it Judy Garland, Clint Eastwood or an Avengers superhero? No, it's staff at Odeon Port Solent on National Cinema Day! (photos by the author)

NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers. Although their factual accuracy has been checked by Allen Eyles, there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail.

Allen has also added comments, where indicated.

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: [\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

ABERDEEN



The three-screen Belmont Filmhouse closed suddenly on 6 October after its parent company went into administration. It was built in 1896 as a Trade Hall and became a full-time cinema in 1910. It closed in 1953 and became a warehouse. It reopened in September 2000. A petition has been launched to save the venue. A local café owner has said he has plans to buy it.. {26736}

Press & Journal, Aberdeen; Aberdeen Live – 7 October; photo taken September 2008

ABINGDON (Oxon)

The Abbey cinema opened in December 2018. The current lease from the Council expires in November and there have been some “issues” concerning the renewal. It is run by Ian and Sue Wiper, who operate the Regal Evesham. {59171}

The Herald Series – 30 August

ALTON (Hants)

The owner of the Palace announced his intention to retire a year ago and has not changed his mind. It is on the market for £850,000. Both the projectors are no longer supported by the manufacturers for both hardware and software. He has had two firm offers to buy them to salvage spare parts. He has said they will be available one month after the cinema has closed. Meanwhile, the owners of the Sugarloaf Café in Anstey Park will show family movies once or twice a month in their 60-seat auditorium. {24101}

Alton Herald – 3 September, 1 October

ASHFORD (Kent)

The fourteen-screen Cineworld at Eureka Leisure Park was forced to close for the afternoon of 7 September due to damage caused by heavy rain leaking into the building. It reopened in time for evening performances. {24116}

Kent Online – 7 September; sent in by Philip Stevens

BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

The new Cineworld opened in The Glass Works Square on 9 September. Among the thirteen screens are the circuit's own-brand IMAX, 4DX and ScreenX auditoria. David Bradley, star of the 1969 film *Kes*, was amongst the guests who cut the film ribbon – a 1 minute video is at tinyurl.com/barnsley-cineworld. {67704}

The Star – 23 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock

The two-screen Parkway (ex Odeon) has been rented since 2005 but the operator has now struck a deal to buy the freehold. Director Rob Younger said that negotiations held prior to a possible auction were successful. The move will safeguard the venue's future. It is one of the few cinemas left that can show 70mm. {6208}

Barnsley Chronicle – 16 September

BASILDON (Essex)

The opening of the ten-screen Empire has been delayed yet again. It is hoped it will finally open in December.

Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 7 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

The former ABC/Robins cinema could become workspaces for firms in the creative industries, as well as social and events spaces. According to a Council report, these could include places for immersive technology such as virtual reality, in addition to offices for firms in the screen industries, software and computer services. The project is dependent on the Council's bid for Arts Council funding. The cinema opened in September 1971 and closed in December 1999. {24134}

Essex Live – 13 October

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)



Arun District Council has granted an extra £3m to boost the Levelling Up Funds allocated for the refurbishment of the Alexandra Theatre. This means about £15.2m will be available for the project. The CTA visited in March 2009, when the above picture was taken.

The Argus, Brighton – 6 October; sent in by Barry Quinton & Mike Whitcombe

BOURNEMOUTH

Emergency services attended a fire at the former ABC in Westover Road on 2 September. It is thought to have been started deliberately. There was also a false alarm just days after. The Fire Service has confirmed it is holding discussions on the safety of the building and the virtually adjacent former Odeon both of which are empty. Current fire safety legislation is limited in scope to deal with unoccupied buildings.

Bournemouth Echo – 6 September, 10 October; sent in by John R Forster

BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

The two-screen Scott Cinema closed on 29 September. It was housed in the circle of the former Odeon; the bingo operation in the former stalls had already closed. It marked the final week of films with tickets at just £4.50 and some of the best films of 2022 brought back. Scott Cinemas will operate a new seven-screen cinema at Northgate Yard; It will have two 'lux' screens and two screens with Dolby Atmos. The opening was put back a week to 28 October as the seats hadn't arrived.

Somerset Live – 17 September, 21 October; sent in by Ken Roe & Anthony Wills

BRISTOL

Plans have been approved to demolish the former Broadway in Filwood. It opened in 1938 and was refurbished in 1961. Cinema use ended in 1971 in favour of bingo. That closed around 1992 and the building has been empty since. The works will include structural support steels due to party wall issues, which delayed the demolition. It is expected that housing will be built on the site. {47281}

Bristol World – 2 September

CHELTENHAM (Glos)

The four-screen Tivoli celebrated its first anniversary on 24 September. In that time, it has shown 116 films and more than 30 live streamed cultural performances, as well as hosted special events and functions. There are some photos at tinyurl.com/chelt-tivoli. {66000}

So Glos – 29 September

CHESTER

Work on the six-screen Picturehouse cinema in the Northgate development is continuing, despite its parent company Cineworld filing for bankruptcy in the US [see Cinema Business p6]. However, the company has pulled its on-site café plans. Part of the foyer will now have to be sectioned off to accommodate an independent food and drink outlet. No opening date has been given.

Chester Chronicle – 25 August

COLNE (Lancs)



Plans have been approved for the expansion of the Pendle Hippodrome into a vacant pub next door. The venue first opened in September 1914 and closed in April 1965 in favour of bingo, which lasted until 1978. It reopened as an amateur theatre in December 1986 and shows some films. {29286} photo taken October 2004

Lancashire Telegraph – 19 September; sent in by Philip Crompton

COVENTRY

Previous plans to demolish the former Paris and build student flats (see p23 Bulletin 55/10) were withdrawn following objections. Now revised plans have been approved, reducing the height from six to five storeys with commercial space on the ground floor. The frontage would be retained. {15736}

Coventry Live – 21 September; sent in by Philip Crompton

DARLINGTON

'For Sale' signs have gone up on the former Odeon Luxe (ex ABC), which closed on 30 June. {20950}

Northern Echo – 14 September

DURHAM

Everyman has revealed plans to open a four-screen cinema this winter in the Milburngate development. It will include more than 300 seats, such as velvet sofas and armchairs and will be the group's 39th UK site.

Insider Media – 14 October

EDINBURGH



The cost of refurbishment at the King's Theatre is likely to be 20-30% higher than the original budget of £25m. Stars including Brian Cox and Alan Cumming have issued a plea to save the theatre. {41761}

Daily Record – 25 August; sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo taken September 2008

The parent charity of the Edinburgh Film Festival has gone into administration. This means that the three-screen Filmhouse and also the three-screen Belmont Filmhouse in Aberdeen [see p6] will close immediately. Discussions are already underway to explore ways to keep the Edinburgh Film Festival going as an event. {23226}

The Hollywood Reporter – 6 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock;

Daily Record – 7 October; sent in by Tom Laughlan

FAREHAM (Hants)

Work has now started at the Ferneham Hall. The original building is due to be demolished and the site redeveloped into a venue with an 800-seat auditorium and other performance spaces. Completion is estimated by spring 2024.

Southern Daily Echo – 3 October; sent in by Richard Hawkins & Ian Patterson

GLASGOW (Pollok)

The fourteen-screen Cineworld at the Silverburn Centre has added a new 468-seat IMAX screen. It has 4k laser projection and opened on 14 October. The multiplex itself opened in June 2015. {56054}

Glasgow Live – 30 September

GOSPORT (Hants)



The former Criterion has been bought by the Borough Council and could return as a cinema, theatre and arts facility. It opened in May 1912 and bingo took over in 1968; that closed in March 2020 and the building has been empty since. Gosport is currently without a cinema or a theatre. {45030} photo taken May 2006

Southern Daily Echo – 27 September; sent in by Ian Patterson & Mike Whitcombe

GRAYS (Essex)

Despite assurances just a couple of weeks ago that it would be pressing ahead with the project to turn the former State cinema into a showcase venue, pub chain Wetherspoons has now confirmed it is selling the building. A spokesman said, "JD Wetherspoon has reluctantly concluded it no longer wishes to continue with the project and has appointed CBRE and Savills to market the Freehold Grade II* listed property." There is no published asking price for the building. The estate agent's webpage is [tinyurl.com/state-sale](https://www.tinyurl.com/state-sale).

Constructed in 1938 the State was one of the largest single screen cinemas within Essex, boasting more than 2,200 seats. The cinema closed in 1988. The property was acquired by Wetherspoon in 2015 with proposals to convert into a pub. Having achieving planning permission in 2018, work commenced in 2019 but halted due to the appointed contractor's insolvency. Before a new contractor could be appointed Covid struck and conversion work stopped. In the interim Wetherspoons returned to the Council with a revised planning application, which was also granted. {1837}

Thurrock Nub News – 20 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Gary Donaldson

HULL (East Yorks)

The Grade II listed Tower has closed its doors again only four months after reopening as a ballroom. Events will be cancelled or moved to alternative venues. It opened in June 1914 and films ceased in September 1978. It has since been used as nightclubs and music venues. In October 2012 the two domes on top of the building (visible in the photo) were replaced by a team of mosaic specialists. The building is up for sale with a guide price of £595,000; the estate agents' particulars can be seen at [tinyurl.com/hull-tower-sale](https://www.tinyurl.com/hull-tower-sale). {3278}

Hull Live – 29 July; sent in by David Alexander; photo on front cover

KIRKCALDY (Fife)

The 475-seat Adam Smith Theatre is currently closed for a major refurbishment. The 120-year-old building has already had a new look and a technical upgrade to the auditorium. New seats will be installed in time for the reopening in June 2023. {67785}

On Fife – 25 July; sent in by David J Kay; photo on front cover

LANCASTER

The auditorium of the Palace/ABC has been demolished. It was almost down when Google StreetView passed around the back of the building in March 2022. The front section/foyer is in retail use and will remain. Plans are to build student accommodation on the site of the auditorium but I'm not sure if that has begun yet. {6539}

Sent in by Ken Roe;

LEOMINSTER (Hereford)



The bingo operation in the former Clifton was due to close on 28 October. The cinema opened in October 1936 and films ceased in March 1980. It became a bingo club, which continued under various operators until now. See *Picture House* No 36 pages 37-38. {35646}

Hereford Times – 28 September; photo taken March 2008

LICHFIELD (Staffs)

Plans have been put approved for a four-screen cinema in the former Debenhams store. It would have a mixture of small (up to 48 seats) and large (up to 120 seat) screens. Work is expected to start before the end of the year. An 'boutique' operator has been identified but not named.

Express & Star – 6, 12, 20 October

LONDON (Hampstead)

The two-screen Everyman closed for a month for refurbishment. It reopened on 21 September. {15982}

Camden New Journal – 19 August; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Islington)

I happened to pass the Carlton today and found that the canopy had been refurbished to a good standard of workmanship. It now has new signs on all three elevations – they are in pronounced red and black letters and read **GRACEPOINT**. It does look smart. {15111}

Sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (West End)

A fund has granted a further £30m to a company that is looking to convert the four-screen Odeon Covent Garden on Shaftesbury Avenue back into a theatre and hotel. The venue originally opened as the Saville Theatre in October 1931 and was converted into twin ABC cinemas in December 1970, with both screens equipped for 70mm. It is believed the original stage house and fly tower are still intact. {911}

City AM – 23 August

The G Casino in Coventry Street has been renamed Rialto – the name the Grade II listed premises had as a cinema from 1924 to 1982. {2502}

Sent in by Allen Eyles

MARGATE (Kent)

The Theatre Royal and Winter Gardens are currently closed whilst their long-term future is determined. There are proposals to expand the Grade II* listed Theatre Royal into a building next door so facilities for food and drink can be created. It has been allocated £2m from the Margate Town Deal fund to help with renovation works. {25790}

The Grade II listed Winter Gardens has been allocated £300,000 for an appraisal report on the venue. It is currently boarded-up and deteriorating. Interest has been expressed by at least three operators. The Council has pledged that it will not be considered for any residential use.

Isle of Thanet News – 14, 16, 23 September; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

NAIRN (Highland)



Work has started on restoring the gable of the former Regal. The art deco gable was retained when the site was developed in the 1980s into a supermarket. {44316}

Forres Gazette – 5 October; photo taken September 2008

NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Councillors decided to hold off giving a further £600,000 to cover increased inflationary costs for the new four-screen cinema, currently the subject of a planning application. This will delay the construction. The Council is committed to construct the building before handing it to Scott Cinemas for fit-out.

Herald Express, Torquay – 31 August, 14 September

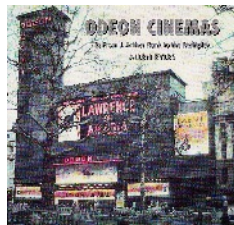
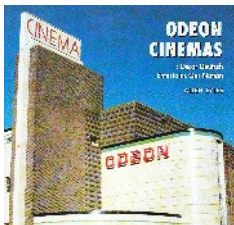
PORTSMOUTH

During the summer of 2022 the fourteen-screen Vue cinema had a complete reseat. Recliners replaced ordinary chairs in all screens. The first eight screens were refitted in August with the remaining six screens closed off and the seats replaced in September. {25249}

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

All you need to know about... ODEON

These two volumes, by Allen Eyles, provide a comprehensive history of the Odeon circuit, from its beginnings in the 1930s up to the multiplex era. Fully illustrated in b/w and colour.



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Five more pages of Newsreel
in the full Bulletin

SCOTTISH CINEMA COMPARISON



Peebles Playhouse {23291}



Nairn Playhouse {44315}



Perth Kings {51303}

By Kevin Wheelan & Harry Rigby

In 1973 Kevin's parents, Henry & Doris Wheelan, toured Scotland. Kevin asked them to take photos of any cinemas they came across and this resulted in 25 pictures. Three are presented here on the left. Below are the same three cinemas, in the same order, as photographed by Harry over 30 years later. You can see how they have changed. We have given the Cinema Treasures reference numbers so you can look up their history.



Peebles Playhouse in May 2017



Nairn Playhouse on a rainy day in September 2008



Perth Kings in September 2006

LETTERS

HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II



I took the attached picture on 14 September. The cinema is the Picturehouse Fulham Road in London which started life as the Forum.

Tony Williams

Editor's Note: I understand several cinemas showed the funeral free of charge. We saw it on a big screen in Norwich Cathedral.



Following the many tributes paid to The Queen, here is a photo that hung in the Granada Slough projection box for decades. The Chief Projectionist, Fred Slater gave it to me when he retired in the 1980; he is pictured on the canopy to the left of the flagpole. What great publicity for *A Queen is Crowned* – I gather the film broke records.

R David Simpson

MURDER MUSIC AND MOVIES

Having watched an episode of Poirot, *The ABC Murders*, it was interesting to see the façade of the old Rex cinema in Uxbridge seen towards the end of the episode. As the killer is seen leaving the cinema the music played over the end credits is a piece by Anthony Mawer titled *Screen Prelude*, which comes from the Dewolf music library. Another cinema to crop up, which features in the 1987 film *Wish You Were Here*, is the Dome cinema Worthing, shown recently on Talking Pictures TV. Several shots, both interior and outside of the cinema, are shown. Although the film is set in the 1950s even the shots of the projection box look authentic of that period.

Staying with TPTV I have discovered two more pieces of music that avid viewers will recognize. The first is the music used for the ever-popular *Footage Detectives* and is a piece titled *Always on Duty* composed by Ziu Moran and recorded by The Original Orchestra. The next item is the Spaghetti western type theme used at the start and end of *Saddle Up* and is called *Western Hero*, composed by Andy Slatter. Incidentally the beginning of this piece can also be heard at the start of a pop music video by Megan Nicole called *Mascara*. All the music mentioned can be found on the YouTube music web site.

John R Forster

NEWS/CARTOON CINEMAS

David Evans' excellent article in the last Bulletin concerning News Theatres and Cartoon cinemas brought back some memories. The Cameo cinema in Leicester operated as a news theatre/cartoon cinema but turned over to showing main films by 1960. When I started work in London in 1963, there were a number of these cinemas in the central area. I remember the cinema at Waterloo Station; it can be seen in the background in the excellent film *Terminus* (1960). However, by 1963 it had turned over to showing older films. I saw my first Will Hay film there, *Oh Mr Porter*. I do not remember any Will Hay films being shown on television at the time. The cinema was situated at first floor level over the outside roadway. The entrance to the cinema was from inside the station so one minute you were inside the station and the next you were in the cinema, which was slightly unnerving. After closure it remained empty for about 20 years before being demolished. It had one thing in common with the Victoria Station cinema as it did not have toilet facilities, something which would not be allowed today.

The Victoria Station news theatre / cartoon cinema was also situated at first floor level and had entrances both from the station and from Buckingham Palace Road. It opened early at 10:45am. One old man came in every day and was allowed to stay all day. It was leased from British Rail who refused to renew the lease as they needed space for the Gatwick line. It was still making a small profit and **Classic**, the operator, said at the time that they would have liked to have kept it going as the last of its type in the country. The closure of the cinema was mentioned as the last item on the main BBC news as the end of an era. This type of cinema with its newsreels, cartoons and general interest films provided a cheap and useful distraction from everyday events.

I went to London in the late 1970s to visit the cinema as I realised that there could not be many of its kind left. *Tom and Jerry* looked better on a large screen. I took in the cinema at Piccadilly Circus at the same time; it eventually became sex cinema in the 1970s. Both cinemas offered easy travelling into central London with shoppers sometimes leaving their children in the cinema; I cannot imagine this happening today. I remember in the early 1970s there was a small piece in the local paper that the **Classic Cinema** in Above Bar, Southampton was intending to turn the first floor into a small cinema to be called the **Tatler**, which may be a news theatre/cartoon cinema. This did not materialise and the first-floor cinema became a cinema showing uncensored films for club members only. Both the **Classic** and the **Tatler** closed in the late 1970s; the ground floor cinema premises are now a Burger Bar.

Ian Patterson

IRISH CINEMAS



Further to Bob Bradshaw's letter on p29 of the last Bulletin regarding Horgan's Picture Theatre in Youghal (Ireland) here is a picture taken by my parents while holidaying in Ireland in 1971, when the cinema was still open. These tiny cinemas seem to have survived much longer in the Irish Republic than in the UK. I imagine that, with what must have been limited finances, they would have run some interesting vintage equipment. All junked, I suppose.

Kevin Wheelan

RITZ LUTON



I had a walk around to see how work is progressing on the old Ritz this morning. The work is almost complete and I attach some photos. There didn't seem to be any builders on site but there were people going in and out so not sure who they may have been! The commercial premises part of the building has surprised me as it looks really smart. I also liked the name plate so I photographed it. I hope the photos are of interest and when its finally finished it will be good to actually get a photo without a skip in it. {6247}

Margaret Burgoine

ANDOVER ERROR

Further to the report in Bulletin 56/5 about the closure of the Mecca bingo hall in Andover, the 114-seat cinema referred to was never in the balcony but was built in the left side of the stalls and showed 16mm uncensored films to club members only and was known as the *Tatler*, opening in March 1971. From the following August the *Tatler* was restricted to the first half of the week and the cinema, renamed the *Classic*, was opened to the public and showed more general films. I remember seeing *Kes* and *The Wild Bunch* there after I had missed them when they were shown at Andover's Savoy cinema. Today the building lies boarded up awaiting its fate.

Ian Nash

MULTIPLEX MASKING



On entering a multiplex auditorium I've become used to being presented with a fixed 'Scope screen with no variable masking. When a Widescreen item is shown the digital projection is relied on to present a firm line to black at the sides of the image. I was therefore very interested when I went to see an iSense presentation at the Odeon Luxe in Telford recently. We did indeed start off with a reasonably sized 'Scope screen with soft digital masking for Widescreen items; not knowing what to expect I was a bit disappointed at the screen size. But just before the feature there was the sight and sound of the hard masking changing dramatically to reveal the promised wall-to-wall and floor to ceiling screen. It was such a large area that 'ordinary' images would have looked lost in the middle. Of course, in olden days the movement would have been hidden by screen tabs but it was all rather nostalgic and, I felt, worthy of note. {23405}

Jeremy Perkins; photo taken October 2018

SLOUGH ADELPHI

I was interested in Bill Gilbert's letter in the last issue about the Slough Adelphi. I worked for Granada Theatres from 1964-1988 but, like Bill, never worked at the Adelphi. When managers did their training, it included a week devoted to sales, visiting shops and cafes, ending on a Saturday evening with a visit to the Adelphi for ballroom training. I recall doing this in 1967, whilst based at the Granada Bedford. The Adelphi manager then was Brian Longley, who left Granada to manage The Tremeloes.

Sadly, I never saw any of the legendary pop shows at the Adelphi. When I managed the Granada Slough from 1974-1987, I visited the Adelphi to see cabaret acts after the bingo sessions. Artistes I saw included The Bachelors, Joe Longthorne, The Swingin' Blue Jeans and Chas & Dave. Hughie Green judged an Easter Bonnet contest. When I arrived, the audience was in the car park – there had been a bomb scare. The cabaret acts were financed by the breweries Granada traded with.

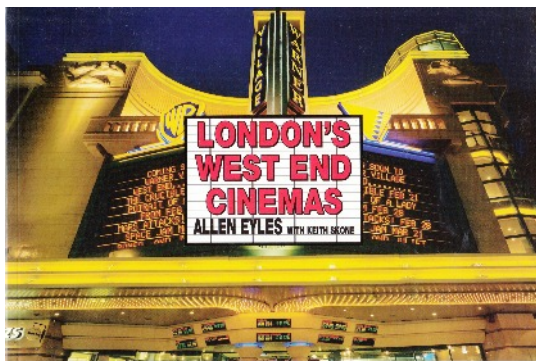
In the film *Three Hats for Lisa* (1965) there is a short scene (about five minutes) filmed outside the Adelphi, when Joe Brown steals a still from a poster frame outside. The poster on the left advertised wrestling, including Dr Death, who was wrestling promoter Paul Lincoln, who also ran the famous 2i's coffee bar in Old Compton Street, London, where many pop stars stared, including Tommy Steele. The poster on the right advertises the ballroom. Both look authentic.

The film is shown from time to time on *Talking Pictures TV* and is also available on DVD from Amazon [£6.89]. It is a musical film on location around London. It also stars Sid James, Una Stubbs, Peter Bowles and Eric Barker with choreography by Gillian Lynne, music by Eric Rogers and written by Leslie Bricusse and Talbot Rothwell.

R David Simpson

More letters in the full Bulletin

London's West End Cinemas by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.



The history of London's West End cinemas dates back more than one hundred years. This book details all of them, in chronological order, totalling well over one hundred, from 1906 up to 2013. The best of the West End's cinemas were outfitted to a very high standard to match their role as showcases for new films, hosting press shows and premières, as well as being a magnet for film enthusiasts anxious to see films on exclusive première runs. Even now, when films are available everywhere at the same time, the West End's cinemas are a vibrant attraction to visitors from all over the world as well as for Londoners having a night on the town. There are interior views as well as exteriors of most of the cinemas and over 50 illustrations are in full colour, together with appendices of club cinemas and theatres used as temporary cinemas.

Large Format paperback, 210 pages, over 400 illustrations, £25.00 plus £3.40 postage, from the Sales Officer.

Published in 2013 in conjunction with English Heritage.

Ordering details on p4

CRITICS' CHOICE

By David Evans

On Saturday 31 March 1945 readers opening their wartime-thin, four-page *News Chronicle* would have found a review by Richard Winnington for a new film *Keep Your Powder Dry* at the prestigious Empire Leicester Square. In this Winnington made reference to the “face-slapping and tantrums of the principles” – Lana Turner, Laraine Day and Susan Peters – who had joined the US Women’s Army Corps for somewhat less than patriotic reasons. Winnington was one of the most respected film critics during the heyday of cinema-going in Britain, where what he wrote in the *News Chronicle* from 1943 to 1953 could sometimes make or break a film at the box office. In this capacity he was joined by two other powerful influences on audiences, Caroline Lejeune at the *Observer* (1928-1960) and Dilys Powell at the *Sunday Times* (1939-1976).



The *News Chronicle* 24 March 1945 – a week earlier than mentioned

Lejeune became film critic at the *Observer* after holding a similar position at the *Manchester Guardian* in the 1920s and gained a reputation for sharp, witty comments about a picture, *Madame Curie* (1943) for example, which she thought made the discovery of radium, by Greer Garson as Madame Curie, “seem almost as glamorous as an encounter with Hedy Lamarr” or the passion-filled Technicolor *Desert Fury* (1947) on which she commented “the only fury I could sense was in my corner of the balcony”. Luckily, for MGM she thought *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944) “a charming picture”.



When Noel Coward’s Technicolored *Blithe Spirit* was released in 1945 Lejeune called it “ninety minutes of concentrated fun” and Dilys Powell in the eight-page *Sunday Times* for 8 April 1945 wrote of it “glowing in Technicolor” at the Odeon Leicester Square. In the same issue, next to advertisements for clothes from fashionable stores such as Harvey Nichols and Dickins and Jones – all stating price and clothing coupon values – she dismissed *Hotel Berlin* at the Warner Leicester Square as having nothing to hold her attention.

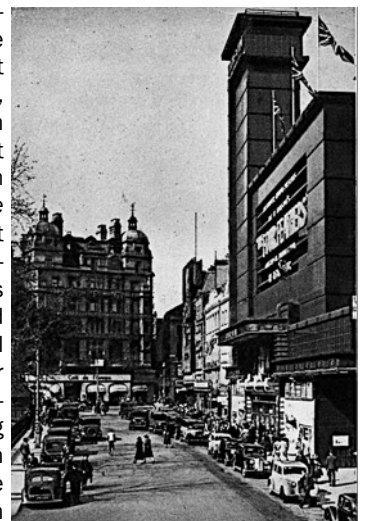


The Warner in 1946

Before this, in 1941, she had rated Disney’s *Fantasia* very highly, commenting that “it takes over two hours but, somehow or other, I’m afraid you have to take the time” and moviegoers did when the picture played its première UK run at the New Gallery Regent Street for five months from July of that year – all due, in no small way, to the positive reviews of Powell and other critics.

As you might expect, not all their reviews got things right. Take *All About Eve* (1950) on which Richard Winnington commented that it

“contains plenty of surface cynicism but no detachment, no edge and no satire...” for a picture that won an Oscar for its director, Joseph L Mankiewicz and which was one of the main attractions at the British box office in 1951. In Dilys Powell’s review for *A Double Life* (1948) she wrote that while “it is essentially skilled, yet the central situation is artificial” and this for a picture whose star, Ronald Colman, dominating the central situation of the plot, won an Oscar for his performance. Even a picture that some found compelling for its portrayal of two lovers with facial disfigurements, which cease to exist when they look at each other through adoring eyes, could be dismissed with faint praise from Caroline Lejeune as “a silly film with considerable charm...” Nevertheless, she certainly hit the mark when commenting on Orson Welles’ first two pictures – *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). When reviewing the former she commented that “this is probably the most exciting film that has come out of Hollywood in twenty-five years” and when reviewing the latter that it was “rich in ideas many will want to copy”. Neither was successful at the British box office but at least ‘Kane’ had a full release on the Gaumont circuit and ‘Ambersons’, although it did not have a release in a West End cinema, had a limited one via the same group.



A postcard of the Odeon Leicester Square in 1945

Surely, to end this article, the comments made by Richard Winnington in his review for *Adventure* (1945) – Clark Gable’s comeback picture after WWII service – “fifty years of the cinema and this is where we have landed” demonstrate the ability of this generation of critics to sum up the worth of a picture in the small amount of space allotted to them in the ultra-thin newspapers of the time. They are sorely missed today...

Editor’s Note: I seem to remember that in 1965 some critic dismissed *The Sound of Music* as a “dim little flick”.